United Nations E/CN.6/2004/12

Economic and Social Coun

Distr.: General
4 December 2003

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Forty-eighth session
1-12 March 2004
Item 5 of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolutions and decisions

Letter dated 31 October 2003 from the President of the Economic and Social Council addressed to the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women

This year's substantive session of the Economic and Social Council reconfirmed the role of the Council as the central forum of the United Nations system for addressing key issues of development cooperation. The session sent a strong message of a renewed political will to realize the global partnership launched at United Nations conferences and summits, in the midst of the disappointing world economic recovery and the slow progress in the post-Doha trade negotiations.

The theme of this year's high-level segment, "Promoting an integrated approach to rural development in developing countries for poverty eradication and sustainable development", provided a timely opportunity to refocus the international agenda on rural development and to reflect on how to work effectively towards the Millennium Development Goals in those areas after a period of neglect. Reflecting the urgency of the subject, the high-level segment brought the unprecedented participation of development agencies and civil society as well as wide and high-level representation from Member States. The Ministerial Declaration adopted at the end of the segment stressed that agriculture and rural development are key to food security, poverty reduction and growth, and to realizing the Millennium Development Goals in developing countries.

I should like to reflect more particularly on some of the important proposals made by the Economic and Social Council concerning the functional commissions. A list of those resolutions adopted by the Council calling for action by the Commission on the Status of Women is attached for your ready reference (see annex).

Among those, I should like to draw your attention in particular to Economic and Social Council resolution 2003/6 on the role of the Council in the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of and follow-up to major United

* E/CN.6/2004/1.

03-64615 (E) 020104

Nations conferences and summits. In the resolution, the Council decided to take the necessary steps for the effective implementation of the provisions of General Assembly resolution 57/270 B of 23 June 2003 that are relevant to the work of the Council and its subsidiary machinery and to keep that implementation under review. The General Assembly, in its resolution 57/270 B, had invited the functional commissions to contribute to the assessment by the Council of the cross-sectoral thematic issue selected for the coordination segment of its substantive session, including through the possible participation of their chairpersons in the discussions on the cross-sectoral thematic issue in the Council. The Council will develop a work programme for its coordination segments by its next session. The General Assembly had also requested each functional commission to examine its methods of work in order to better pursue the implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits. A report of the Secretary-General is to be presented to each of the functional commissions on that issue. I would like to strongly recommend that your functional commission start working on this issue at its 2004 session so that significant progress can be achieved by 2005.

The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2003/49, of 24 July 2003, called upon its subsidiary bodies to further intensify their efforts to mainstream gender perspectives in their work and to continue their efforts to address gender perspectives in relation to the thematic issues of their multi-year programmes of work or in relation to their annual themes. It also called upon the bureaux of its subsidiary bodies to consider how best to facilitate the inclusion of a gender perspective in their work. In addition, the Council emphasized the importance of its subsidiary bodies increasing their collaboration with the Commission on the Status of Women, including by making more systematic use of the output of the Commission.

I should be grateful if you would bring these policy recommendations to the attention of your Commission and take the necessary action to implement them. I would also like to invite you to inform me, at your earliest convenience following the session, of any specific follow-up actions your Commission has taken. The Economic and Social Council continues its dialogue on how best to strengthen its role as the central mechanism for oversight and guidance of the activities of its subsidiary bodies, and it is my utmost interest to enhance the coordination of the work of the Council and its subsidiary bodies. I have conveyed proposals to members of the Council for the further strengthening of the Council and, in particular, the general segment of its substantive session. The Council will continue to reflect upon its role as the central mechanism for oversight and guidance of the activities of its subsidiary bodies.

In addition, I am pleased to inform you that the Economic and Social Council has selected as the theme for its high-level segment next year "Resources mobilization and enabling environment for poverty eradication in the context of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010". The themes selected for the coordination segment in 2004 are: "1. Review and appraisal of the system-wide implementation of the Council's agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system"; and "2. Coordinated and integrated United Nations system approach to promote rural development in developing countries, with due consideration to least developed countries, for poverty eradication and sustainable development". Your active and early consideration of

these themes would be appreciated in order to ensure that your Commission's concerns are fully reflected in the work of the Council in 2004. As noted above, the General Assembly, in its resolution 57/270 B, invited the functional commissions to contribute, from their specific perspectives, to the assessment by the Council of the cross-sectoral thematic issue selected for the coordination segment.

I should finally like to take this opportunity to thank you once again for your participation in the session of the Economic and Social Council in July, and in the meeting between the Bureau and the chairs of all commissions. I am looking forward to our continuing collaboration and to any suggestions you may have on how to strengthen the interaction among the functional commissions and the Council, including at our joint meetings.

May I also inform you that a resumed session of the Economic and Social Council will be held in December 2003. I will revert to you with further information on the outcome of that session in due time.

(*Signed*) Gert **Rosenthal**

Annex

Resolutions and decisions adopted by the Economic and Social Council in 2003 calling for action by the Commission on the Status of Women*

Resolution number	*Title*
2003/6	The role of the Economic and Social Council in the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits
2003/42 (para. 6)	Situation of and assistance to Palestinian women
2003/49 (para. 9)	Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system
2003/58	Enhancement of the functioning of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in regard to the operation of the mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights

* The full text of the resolutions is available at the web site of the Council: www.un.org/esa/coordination/ecosoc.